



Are You Ready?

NEWSLETTER

Courtesy of the U. S. Fire Administration

June 1999

USFA Y2K INFO CENTER

Emmitsburg, Maryland

The USFA Y2K Info Center receives and reviews the comment forms from our web site link www.usfa.fema.gov/y2k/y2kform.htm. Staff at the Info Center provides resource web sites and referrals between fire service providers. Information is available by mail, phone or electronically.

Staying In Touch

The USFA Y2K Info Center wants to hear from fire and emergency service providers. If your organization has experienced successes or barriers to Y2K preparedness, sharing them with the Info Center will facilitate exchanging your information with fire colleagues nationwide. Our mission when providers contact the Info Center is to put them in touch with "real life" solutions and support from fire colleagues. See the section on "Best Practices." Check out various states' Y2K Best Practices at:

⌘ www.fema.gov/y2k/bst_prac.htm

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FEATURED THIS ISSUE

- ⌘ **FAQs**
 - ⌘ **NEW PRODUCTS**
 - ⌘ **BEST PRACTICES**
-

Y2K Questions? Information to share?

www.usfa.fema.gov/y2k/

(301) 447-1328 10 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. EST

USFA Y2K INFORMATION OFFICE

16825 South Seton Avenue
Emmitsburg, Maryland 21727

Contingency Planning

Countdown to Y2K...

The ongoing NASFM/USFA survey of a representative sample of fire departments has input from 292 departments in 46 states. As of mid June, 90% indicate that they are assessing their vulnerabilities and expect to be compliant by December 31, 1999. However, the existence of contingency plans varies greatly by department and system. *With or without* compliance of computers and mission critical systems, a contingency plan is vital due to the impact of inter-reliance and interdependency in our communities.

USFA with assistance from NENA and the Department of Justice surveyed thousands of 911 Centers nationwide from populations of fewer than 1,000 to over 200,000. With over 2,000 responses, 91% report they expect to be ready by December 31, 1999, and 54% have contingency plans in place. //

⌘ **Getting Ready for Y2k: A Workshop for Emergency Management**

An information workshop for the emergency management community. Five modules easily adapt to meet audience needs. *Topics include assessment, promoting public awareness, developing and exercising contingency plans.* Instructional tools include an instructor guide; video, tool kit and note taking guide. Available in three formats: classroom, interactive Internet and CD-ROM. Available at www.fema.gov/y2k or call FEMA Publications at 1-800-480-2520.

⌘ **Y2K & You: A New Horizon**

An informative pamphlet of Y2K FAQs at the family and community level. Download in Adobe Acrobat from www.fema.gov/y2k or call 1-800-480-2520.

⌘ **Does Your Family Have a Disaster Supplies Kit?**

Disasters happen anytime and anywhere. And when disaster strikes, you may not have much time to respond. Your family will cope best by preparing for disaster before it strikes. Visit this FEMA site: www.fema.gov/pte/supplies.htm

FAQs

Q: Our department has just started preparing for Y2K, and our chief has asked me to coordinate this project. Where should I begin?

A: The typical Y2K process begins with: 1) Assessing vulnerable systems. 2) Fixing those systems that are not Y2K compliant. 3) Testing those fixes to ensure they function properly. 4) Develop contingency plans for all *mission critical functions*. Mission critical functions are those required to insure the safety and protection of lives and property.

With less than 6 months to go, you may need to adjust this process. First, identify mission critical functions and develop contingency plans for performing those functions in the event that Y2K creates problems in the way they are currently performed. It is critical to practice your plans after they are developed. If assessment, fixing and testing can occur without compromising the contingency planning effort, these may be concurrent activities. However, do not delay contingency planning to accommodate other activities.

Q: Members of our community are calling our fire department and asking, "what are you doing to prepare for Y2K?" What should we tell them?

A: The truth. Let them know exactly what it is your department is doing. If you are just now developing contingency plans, tell them that. If you are an agency that began preparing for Y2K months ago and are through with your remediation efforts let the community know.

Q: Our department is considering canceling leave around December 30th through the end of January. Is this a good idea?

A: The affects of Y2K are unpredictable. In fact, many organizations – both public and private - have already initiated this policy, including fire and EMS organizations, law enforcement, public utilities, and government agencies. //

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Fire Y2K Best Practices

Beyond the Chips...Fire Service Providers Prepare Their Communities for Y2K

Ohio - The Hudson Fire Department plan includes checking with local hospitals to determine compliance of all communications hook-ups and conducting door-to-door canvass of major businesses alerting them of the Y2K problem possibilities and to have fire alarm systems, elevator, and HVAC systems checked for Y2K compliance, particularly in nursing homes, hospitals, schools, and day care centers. The EMS sector is developing a list of critically ill residents living at home and developing a plan for checking on them. POC: John Duber, Assistant Chief
(330) 342-1860 //

South Dakota - State Fire Marshal, Dan Carlson, reports the State Fire Marshal's Office in Pierre compiled and distributed manufacturer fire alarm Y2K statements to fire chiefs, schools, NASFM and the general public upon request. //

Texas - Mike Evitts, Assistant Chief of Irving Fire Department reports they are mapping locations of medical equipment dependant citizens and will visit these at risk individuals to assess their potential needs. //

California – John McFarland, Fire Chief of Eureka Fire Department provided a concept proposal for maintaining telecommunications to a PSAP/9-1-1 Center in the event of failure in wireline service. It allows for redundancy by using cellular instruments on the same provider system without involvement of the wireline infrastructure. The procedure would not require special knowledge by the citizen and provides a cost-effective method to maintain community and regional contact with emergency services via the PSAP. POC: eurekaafd@northcoast.com //

USFA wishes to thank all members of the fire service for responding to surveys and sharing information resources and contingency plans. We hope to hear from more fire service providers in the weeks to come. The next newsletter will feature unique PSAP approaches to Y2K planning.